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C O N F I D E N T I A L HANOI 002319

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DEPT FOR OES/STC, EAP/K, EAP/MLS
STATE PASS TO DOE FOR NNSA KMEDELSON, SDICKERSON AND
DTYNAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2016
TAGS: [ENRG](#) [KNNP](#) [OTRA](#) [PARM](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: DOE VISIT IDENTIFIES SECURITY CONCERNS AT
RADIOACTIVE WASTE STORAGE FACILITY NEAR HANOI

REF: A. STATE 135998

[1](#)B. HANOI 02128

Classified By: DCM JOHN ALOISI FOR REASONS 1.4 (F/G)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Keith Young, Physical Security Protection Specialist from Sandia National Laboratories, working under contract to the Department of Energy (DOE), conducted a site assessment of a radioactive waste storage facility approximately 47 kilometers NW of Hanoi on August 28. Young visited the site at the invitation of the Vietnam Agency for Radiation and Nuclear Safety and Control (VARANSAC).

[1](#)2. (C) Young identified concerns regarding the physical security protection at the facility in his survey. He noted that records kept at the facility had no information on the radioactivity level of the waste. The nature of his visit did not entail providing recommendations for security upgrades, though he noted that additional security precautions at the site would be prudent.

[1](#)3. (C) Young reports that the storage facility included numerous radioactive isotopes (including plutonium, cesium, and cobalt) being secured by little physical protection other than an unarmed guard. The only electricity at the site consisted of a fifty foot extension cord running from the neighboring house. The facility's inventory included names and descriptions of items being stored, but the column designated for radioactivity level was blank. Neither Young's guide nor the guard was able to answer questions about the radioactivity level of the waste being stored there. Based on the item descriptions, Young commented that it could range from harmless, very low-level radioactive waste to dangerous materials from both a security and a health perspective (particularly for the guard whose job requires him to stand in proximity to the waste). Given the potential risk presented by this material, he commented that stronger security measures should be put in place.

[1](#)4. (C) Young will provide DOE/Washington with a more detailed assessment report on his visit. He indicated that the physical protection system (PPS) at this facility was the purview of a separate DOE-sponsored program. We anticipate that the Vietnamese will take the concerns identified by DOE seriously and will follow up. Embassy will continue to support DOE efforts in this area.
MARINE